MINUTES OF LEISURE CENTRE TASK GROUP

4TH JULY 2013

PRESENT:

Councillors Mistry (Chairman), Mrs Bragg, Dodd, Mrs Parker and Roberts.

Tim Margerison (Building Control and Corporate Property Manager), Caroline Johnson (Sports and Recreation Manager), Christine Fraser (Corporate Finance Analyst), Debbie Dawson (Scrutiny Officer) and Claire Waleczek (Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer (Team Leader)).

17. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2013 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

18. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillor Roodhouse and Anna Rose, Head of Planning and Culture.

19. CONSTRUCTION UPDATE AND REPORT ON DELAY TO THE PROGRAMME

The Building Control and Corporate Property Manager updated the Task Group on the construction programme for the project and delays to the build.

Due to adverse weather conditions during late 2012, the contractor had submitted an extension time request for four weeks at that time. Further adverse weather conditions in early 2013 affected the progress of the pool area construction and tiling. A relevant event notice was submitted by the contractor for a 19 day delay. Despite these delays, Shepherds Construction was committed to completing Phase 1 of the project on 9th August 2013.

The pool area was now tiled and the moveable floor installed. The lighting system was being installed currently. The Amateur Swimming Association was due to measure the pool, to ensure it complied with regulations for competition use.

Phase 2 of the project included the demolition of the Ken Marriott Leisure Centre (KMLC), construction of the new car park and infrastructure, removal of the temporary car park, restoration of the recreation ground and planting of the landscaping scheme. Landscaping had already begun at the rear of the leisure centre.

During the initial phase of demolition of the KMLC, it was found that the building had more asbestos-containing materials than originally thought. Shepherds were currently in the process of agreeing a method statement with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in order to remove the materials to its satisfaction. This had resulted in a further 14 day delay notice for Phase 2 of the project.
In response to question from members, the following points were made:

Security arrangements at the site would be reviewed as part of transitional arrangements for the handover to GLL.

Officers had challenged Shepherds on the viability of the 9 August completion date for Phase 1. Shepherds had complied with all of the requirements placed on them by the Council and had made a clear commitment to completion by that date.

The planning conditions for the leisure centre required environmental analysis of emissions from the biomass boiler and this was due to be undertaken shortly. It was agreed that officers would provide a report to task group members on this matter, outlining how compliance with this planning condition would be demonstrated.

Members suggested various measures that could be taken to manage customer expectations and ensure positive first impressions in the first days of opening.

20. BUDGET UPDATE

The Corporate Finance Analyst gave an update on the current budget position with regard to the project cost.

The projected outturn cost was just below the contract sum. Officers confirmed to Members that the contract included five per cent retention, half of which would be paid on completion and the remainder a year after completion, as standard business practice.

21. OPENING DATE AND OFFICIAL OPENING

Officers emphasised that the public’s expectations with regard to the opening of the leisure centre needed to be managed effectively.

Phase 1 of the landscaping scheme would be complete by the opening date of 31st August 2013. Illustrated hoardings would be erected from the remaining construction site through to the new leisure centre entrance.

Officers were currently trying to secure a high profile sports personality to officially open the leisure centre on 25th October 2013.

22. OPERATOR PRESENTATION

The Task Group received a presentation from Glen Stait-Loveridge, General Manager of the new leisure centre and John Amatt, Regional Head of Operations at GLL, concerning the operation of the new leisure centre.

The following points were made as part of the presentation and in response to questions from members:

• GLL took over the leisure centre management on 1st April 2013
• a temporary gym opened at the Thornfields Bowling Club on 1st May 2013 and has been very popular with current members. The equipment available was better than that provided in the KMLC.
• from 2 April 2013 GLL leased a retail unit in the Clock Towers shopping centre as a focus point for customers to sign up for gym memberships at the new leisure centre. The lease for the shop has now expired.
• 1200-1300 current members had transferred to the new membership packages offered. Total membership was now 1723.
• A mobilisation plan was in place for the public opening of the leisure centre on Saturday 31 August. There were 450 actions which were being managed and assigned to leisure centre staff.
• Staff training and upskilling would be undertaken during the two weeks following 9th August 2013. There were training opportunities for staff in new areas such as athletics.
• There would be a ‘soft opening’ of the leisure centre from 29 August, with the intention to invite existing user groups to try out the new facilities.
• A new swimming lesson programme was being developed. Current members would be contacted in the near future about this.
• The new leisure centre would offer a range of different membership packages to ensure social inclusion.
• 51 contracted staff and 57 casual staff had been transferred under TUPE arrangements to the new leisure centre. Further posts would be appointed to including a Track Co-ordinator, Technical Manager, and Health Programme Co-ordinator.
• It was recognised that the cleanliness of the leisure centre was extremely important and would be monitored closely.
• Arrangements were being made for the opening day and official opening of the leisure centre. GLL had experience of managing the opening of new facilities and reassured members that they were putting the necessary steps in place to ensure first impressions were positive.
• Rugby Borough Council officers had already begun to hold monthly client monitoring meetings with GLL.

The Task Group thanked Mr Stait-Loveridge and Mr Amatt for their presentation.

23. NEXT STEPS

It was agreed that a final visit to the new leisure centre by the Task Group and members of Cabinet be held on Wednesday 28th August 2013 during the ‘soft opening’ week. The final meeting of the Task Group would take place on 26 September 2013.

CHAIRMAN